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Consolation for the Afflicted :

OR, THE

Way to prevent Fainting

UNDER

Outward or Inward Trouble.

I N

A DISCOURSE, occasioned by
the Death of Mr. *Edward Rede*, who
Departed this Life, *Jan. 17th. 169 $\frac{1}{4}$.*

By *TIMOTHY ROGERS, M.A.*

L O N D O N :

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THE PREFACE.

TO any that seriously consider the Miseries of Life, and the distressed Times in which we live; it will appear needful to have more than ordinary Supports, for our Days are clouded with more than ordinary Trouble. The vast numbers of the Sick, the Melancholy, the Desolate, and the Mourning, require at the Hands of all a great deal of Pity, especially at theirs, who by their Character and Office are obliged to tender the Welfare of Souls, of which number I have the Honour to be one.

I shall not so much grate upon the Ears of my Reader, as to tell him, I was importuned to Print this Discourse; such an Excuse is superannuated, and worn out by several Writers long ago. If a Man do

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really think that what he Composes may be for the good of many, 'tis a Zeal not to be blamed if he endeavours to shine in as publick a Sphere as he can, and, if all Circumstances considered, he thinks it would be unsuccessful to such an End, he is very simple if he suffer himself to be prevail'd upon.

The Providences of God towards us, which for a long time have had a threatening and gloomy Aspect, do loudly call upon the Ministers of the Gospel to muster together what Considerations they can; to keep the Minds of good Men from sinking under the Troubles which have either actually seiz'd them, or are like to come: None are long without affliction, either from what they feel themselves, or from what they see their Friends endure; whose Groans and Fears make their days not to run away so smoothly, as otherwise they might. In some Families indeed, there is the Voice of Singing, of Health, and Praise; But alas, in how many more are there the wan and pale looks of the Diseased, and the Complaints of such as are vex-
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ed with acute and almost intolerable Pains. How many Houses are mourning for the Dying or the Dead? If we go abroad, how many things convince us that the Times are bad? An abounding Impiety, various Losses by Sea, and a miserable Decay of Trade by Land, and now and then terrible Fires in our Cities, and an universal and growing Poverty, that eats like a Canker, and diffuses its Venom almost over every part. These all make it necessary for us in earnest to repent of those Sins that have occasioned such Calamities, and to study how best suitably to behave our selves under the Hand of God.

*To promote this, I publish this Discourse. The wise Man advises, Prov. 31. 6. Give strong Drink to him that is ready to perish, and Wine to those that be of heavy Hearts; For moderately taken by Persons ready to faint, it recreates and cheers their Spirits, it does usually blunt the Edge of troubled and uneasie Thoughts, and sometimes prevents an overwhelming and excessive Grief; but far more comfortable is the Refreshment that arises from
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the Divine Promises, when they are applied by Faith; they spread a Liveliness on the very Countenances of the Afflicted, and fill their Souls with Cælestial Joys: Without these, David was like to faint, tho' he was no melancholy Man; he was of a sanguine Constitution; his Spirits were very brisk, and he was naturally bold and daring.

Seeing my Discourse is against the Disease of Fainting, I would wrap my Prescriptions in as soft and easie Terms as may be; for 'tis necessary to the Patient, that the Vehicle be good as well as the Medicine proper, had I affected high Strains I could have made a great noise with Syncope, Leipothymia, and Deliquium, and other Physical Words, that might have frightened the Reader instead of curing him: But Divinity shines with the purest Light when she is in her own native Colours; and Plainness does always agree better with her than Embroidery. It belongs to my Office not to have recourse to the Dispensatory but to the Bible.

And

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And least the way in which I lead my Reader should by the Ruggedness of my Language seem tedious, I have quoted, and called in now and then some Learned Men to bear him Company, who will sweeten the Harshness of his Travel by the Pleasures of their Conversation, and by the Richness of their Matter and Expressions help out my poor Entertainment, to which I bid the Reader welcome, for tho' the Fare be coarse, yet I hope 'tis healthful, and I pray God that he may find it to be so.

The

*The following Books have been lately
Published by the Author of this
Discourse.*

1. **P**RACTICAL Discourses, on Sickness
and Recovery.

2. *Early Religion: Or, the Duty and
Interest of Youth.*

3. A Discourse concerning *Trouble of
Mind*, and the Disease of *Melancholy*.

4. *Fall not out by the Way: Or, a
Persuasion to a Friendly Correspondence
between the Conformists and Non-Confor-
mists.*

5. *The Changeableness of the World;*
with respect to Nations, Families and
particular Persons.

CON-

CONSOLATION
FOR THE
AFFLICTED.

PSAL. xxvii. 13.

I had fainted, unless I had believed to see the Goodness of the Lord in the Land of the Living.

I Know not well with what in all the World most fitly to compare this our short and miserable Life. We begin it with Tears, and for the most part we go weeping to the Grave : Our Life is as

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Job

Job says, *Swifter than a Weaver's Shuttle*; and how soon is that thrown from one end of the Loom to the other; 'tis as the Wind, then which nothing has a Motion more quick and rapid; 'tis as a Cloud that melts away in showers; 'tis as a Tale that is told, which yields a little Pleasure and Diversion, but is soon ended; 'tis a Vapour that frisks to and fro for a little while, and then is attenuated into a drop of Rain, or vanish'd into Air: 'Tis as a Winter Season, whose Days have a little Brightness but a great deal of Storm, and which is attended with many a long and doleful Night; or 'tis as a Flower that looks green and flourishing for a few moments, but is quickly withered or trod upon. This World in which we now live is as one great Hospital full of various Ails, Sicknesses and Calamities; Where can we look but we see sorrowful and distressed Objects, that excite our Grief and Pity? Where can we go but we meet with the Tears of the Fatherless and the Widows, of the Oppressed and of the Poor? What Groans do we hear from

the Afflicted.

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from the Afflicted, that astonish our Thoughts and pierce our Hearts? How many Sick are there that we cannot cure? How many doubting, trembling Souls that we cannot comfort? How many bleeding Wounds do we see that we cannot stop? How many fainting that we cannot revive? And how many dying whose Glass we cannot turn again? The Sence and the View of the Miseries of Mankind have put the most knowing and most inquisitive in all Ages, upon several Searches to find out some Methods of Calmness and Tranquility under all Events; and seeing Calamities were unavoidable, they endeavoured to meet them with a serene Forehead and undaunted Courage: They sought how to bear the Burden which they could not throw off, and how to weather out the Storm of Life that they could not lay, what the *Philosophers* by the Guidance of unassisted Nature looked for from their Maxims, and their grave Sentences: We meet with in that Revelation, which God has given to us in the Scriptures;

which in all Assaults furnish us with proper Weapons to resist and subdue our Enemies ; they are our *Counsellors*, our Shield and our Magazine ; they encourage us with sweet Promises, and with glorious Hopes ; and they propose to our Imitation the most Generous and Heroical Examples ; among which this of *David* is none of the least. *I had fainted, unless I had believed to see the Goodness of the Lord in the Land of the Living* : And how many blessed Souls both in Heaven and Earth can set their Seal to the same Truth ? Conversing every day as I do with poor, sick, drooping, melancholy People, who are in terrible Anguish, and great Amazement, to see and to hear whom is to behold the woeful Effects of the first Apostacy. I would willingly study something, that in so miserable and forlorn a State of Things might be for their Support and Consolation ; especially, *Remembering the Wormwood and the Gall*, that I my self have tasted for many Months, having by the wonderful Providence of God escaped out of the

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House of Bondage, and out of sharp Troubles, I would willingly lend them my Assistance to bring them thence; and may the God that delights in Mercy, that does not shut out the Cry of the Poor and of the Needy, make my present Discourse available to such an excellent and honourable end: May the great Physician of Souls give me of his Tenderneſs and of his Skill, that like him I may know how to cheriſh and direct the Mourners and the Broken-hearted. We are commanded, *To comfort the Feeble minded to ſupport the Weak, and to be patient toward all,* 1 Theſſ. 5. 14. *And to liſt up the Hands that hang down, and the feeble Knees,* Heb. 12. 12. Knowing therefore that of all Sins diſtruſt, and a deſpair of God's Mercy is one of the moſt heinous and abominable. I moſt readily embrace that opportunity which is given me of Preaching on this Text, occaſioned by the Death of Mr. *Edward Read*, a Country Gentleman, who for the moſt part of his Life lived near *Saluſbury*, but after a ſhort Sickneſs finiſhed his Courſe

at *London*. It was desired that I should so perform this Solemnity ; and I perceive of by what he said sometime before he died, mo that he had a particular Inclination to this He Text ; it was the more desired by him, ver because the same Text was preached up- tha on by a Minister in the Country, when My his Mother was committed to the Grave : v. And I doubt not but this place of Scrip- on ture might be very dear to him, by Rea- ho son of the unexpected Afflictions and *stu* Disappointments which he had met with fer from one to whom he was a-kin : How- *Go* ever it be, this Subject is very necessary *mi* to us all, for we are either distressed, or in we may be so. *We are born to trouble yo as the sparks flie upward ;* And 'twill be rit our Prudence in the fair Season to pro- m vide for Clouds, in Health for Sicknes, on and in Life for Death ; that so when Af- N fliction comes we may not faint but be- no lieve. In this *Psalms* you see with what no Strings *the sweet Singer of Israel* did tune C his Harp ; with what Oil, with what *in* Encouragements, and with what Hopes. *bi* The Lamp of *Israel* was maintained, for *K*

uld so he is called, 2 Sam. 21. 17. Several
ive of the former Verses would yield us a
ed, most agreeable Variety of useful Truth.
his He was a very good Man, but he had
im, very obstinate and numerous Enemies,
up- that were full of Rage and Cruelty ;
nen *My foes came upon me to eat up my flesh,*
ve: v. 2. They thought to have made but
ip- one Meal of poor *David* ; but when they
ea- hoped to swallow and devour him, *they*
nd *stumbled and fell.* Hence you may ob-
ith serve, that *meer unpowerful Innocence and*
w- *Goodness will not secure a Man from Ene-*
ry *mies,* tho' it may give him Consolation
or in his Miseries, as it did him, v. 3. there
ble you see the *little Man* had a mighty Spi-
be rit ; *Saul* and all his Army should not
o- make him daunted ; he would venture
is, on them tho' they far exceeded him in
Af- Number and in Strength ; but he was
pe- not only scorched with a Thirst of Glory,
at nor was it his only pleasure to Fight and
ne Conquer ; but his main desire was *to dwell*
at *in the House of the Lord all the Days of*
es. *his Life,* Ver. 4. Hence Obs. 2. *A good*
or *King tho' he have a great skill in fighting*
so

will principally desire and promote the Prosperity and Welfare of the Church : I mean not any one party that call themselves so, but all good Christians, that are loyal and peaceable. In the following parts of this Psalm, David revives himself with renewed Acts of Trust and Hope in God, which made him still more resolute and couragious : And says he, Vers. 10. When my Father and Mother forsake me, then the Lord will take me up. Obs. 3. The nearest Relations may be unkind, and those whom Nature and Blood ought to make most tender may be most cruel ; And yet even then the Providence and the Care of God can avert our Miseries ; he will be a Friend, when they are so no more. I find that David laboured under false Accusations ; No Age has ever escaped the Revenge and the Poyson of a Lying Tongue ; False witnesses, says he, are risen up against me ; they falsly represented him to the King ; they mis-interpreted his Actions and Designs ; they did all they could to blast his Name and Reputation, and to stigmatize him as a Rebel

the Rebel; and upon this he says, *I had fainted.* Obs. 4. *There are no Wounds of which an ingenious Mind is more sensible than of those which are given to his Name and Reputation.* But the Two Propositions that from these Words I design to insist upon, are these :

First, *That the greatest and the best of Men are obnoxious to sore Tryals, and lyable to faint under them.*

Secondly, *That Faith in the Divine Goodness is the nearest way to Support and Consolation under all the Miseries of Life.*

It is needless to prove that good Men and great too are obnoxious to Trouble: Need I tell you that there are cold Storms in the highest Mountains, nay that the Mountains are often clad in Snow when the Valleys are arrayed with Grass; need I to tell you that strong Winds shake the *Cedars of Lebanon*, and the *Oaks of Bashan* as well as make the little humble Shrubs

Shrubs tremble. Was there ever any good Man that was not afflicted? Was there ever any afflicted that at one time or other was not like to sink? Even Crowns have their Thorny Cares, and the Heads of Kings are not always void of uneasie Thoughts; they cannot always sleep, tho' they have soft Pillows to lie upon: But to proceed in this Discourse, as to the clearing of the first Proposition. I will shew,

1. *What are the Causes of fainting under Trouble.*

2. *What Methods we are to use in order to prevent or remove so uncomfortable a Frame of Soul.* So that as we shall discern the Disease, by God's Blessing we shall be Cured.

The Scripture does frequently represent the Motions of our Minds by those Actions that relate to our Bodies, and whereof we never fail to be very sensible, it is an excellent thing to have a clear insight into our own Nature: And as all

Know-

the Afflicted.

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Knowledge adds an Ornament and Beauty to the Mind, which without it is a deformed and a ghastly thing. So the Knowledge of *Natural Philosophy* hath great and unspeakable Advantages: But I come not here to read you a Lecture of *Anatomy*, nor to tell you what Diseases are incident to Humane Bodies, and how many ways there are of going out of the World, tho' there be but oneway of coming in. I appear not here as a *Doctor*, but as a *Divine*, not as an Healer of your Bodies, but as a Reliever of your Souls, and an Helper of your Faith.

First, *Sharp and long Afflictions are the Cause of Fainting*; their sharpness is apt to corrode and fret the Soul, and their length to tire it; and that they may be both sharp and long daily Experience evinces; notwithstanding the grave Sayings of some old doting Philosophers to the contrary: So they are in both these respects, in the *Gout*, the *Stone*, *Melancholy*, *Convulsions*, and several more Calamities and Diseases. Prov. 18. 14. *The Spirit*

*Spirit of a Man will sustain his Infirmary, but a wounded Spirit who can bear? The natural Force of a Sanguine courageous Man may bear the first or the second brunt and assault of Trouble; his briskness may put away that by which a feebler Person, and one of a more soft Constitution is overcome; his Wisdom and Thought may sweeten his Evils for a while, but if they continue, and if one come fast upon the back of another; if Afflictions croud upon him, and many Seas and Winds meet he will be quickly overpowered, and be tempted to Impatience, and Murmuring, and Distrust; and if he yield to these, his Spirit is then wounded, and his Load is insupportable, and he is driven hither and thither at the Mercy of the Waves; he has lost the Government of himself, and cannot Pilot his Vessel any longer. 'Tis the multitude of Troubles that makes us apt to faint; all thy Waves are gone over me says that good Man, *Psal. 88. 7.* and *Job 19, 9. 10.* *He hath stript me of my Glory, and taken the Crown from my Head;**

Head ; he hath destroyed me on every side, and I am gone ; and mine Hope hath he removed like a Tree, i. e. He fainted, he sunk, he was in despair. Let him look to what quarter of Heaven soever he would, there was no promising Cloud, no sign at all of help ; he was in a wide Sea and saw no Land ; and says Job 7. 20. Thou settest me as a Mark, and I am a Burden to my self. I have a great many Afflictions, and now I am become mine own affliction. I am weary of my self, where-ever I go I am still the poor miserable Job. If a Man travel very fast, or go a great way he is weary, his Spirits are exhausted, his Strength is gone, and he is faint ; thus long Pain of Body quite tires out the poor groaning Patient, and indeed Pain is a sorer temptation to fainting than any outward Loss whatsoever. A Man will bear the Unkindness, or the loss of Friends, or the loss of his Estate, or any other outward thing with much more courage than great Pain of Body, or wearisome and uneasie Thoughts of Mind : As is evident in Job, who whilst
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in Health was thankful, but when the Devil brought Sicknes and Terrour on him, then he curst his Day. Great Torment is worse than Insensibleness; as 'tis worse to be miserable than not to be, it weakens the Force of the Soul to have Affliction and Trouble long continued, from Month to Month, and Year to Year; such an one holds out a good while arguing with himself and pleading the Promises, but by frequent assaults is e'en forced to yield like a poor Man swimming in the Sea, his Love of Life, and his desire of reaching the Shoar makes him with all his might to keep above the Waves, but finding that he is still far from help, and that his Strength fails him, he yields himself to his watry Grave. In vast Throngs and Crouds People are most apt to faint; and so 'tis in a multitude of Troubles from without and within, the stock of Spirits in the Body being wasted and decayed leaves it to Paleness and Inactivity, and the Graces of the Soul being long put to their utmost tryal, begin to shrink, and like a
River

the River long burnt with Heat its Motion is
on very languid, and almost indiscernible.
or. It creeps it may be along its Banks, but
'tis does not run so smoothly or so swiftly as
it it used to do; upon the first onset of
to Trouble all the Spirits run to the Heart,
on as to the main Fort of Life; but with
ear long opposition they desert even their
ood Station there too: Hence we often hear
ng afflicted Persons, saying, *I can bear no*
is *more, I must sink, I must perish*; Tho'
an thanks be to God, they are in stronger
fe Hands than their own, or else they were
bar undone.

a- 2. *Over great intenseness of thought*
is *is another cause of fainting*. I know the
gth greatest part of the World are heedless
try and rash, and do not think at all; but
ads *melancholy Persons*, and the *Long-afflicted*
'tis are always enclined to pore and muse;
out and it is in vain to desire them not to
he think, for they cannot help it no more
s it than a Man in a Storm can fancy 'tis a
ces Calm? Who can without fainting bear
ut- a long continued Thought, and such
e a thought
ver

thought as is doleful and sad? We can neither bear Intense, joyous Thoughts, nor such as are sorrowful; there is a Consternation seizes the poor Soul upon the review of its own miserable Case; and it says as *Job*, *I am afraid of mine own Sorrows*; a Flame of Anguish preys upon the Spirit and weakens it, as hot Spirits frequently drunk lessen the Radical moisture, and are vastly prejudicial to a Health: To be inwardly scorcht with the apprehension of Misery soon makes the Soul languish, as you know People are *Li* more apt to faint in hot Weather than in a colder Season; we do by this means waste our own Strength: All things that are immoderate are very unhealthful; *sister* my Lord *Bacon* in his History of *Life and Death*, observes, That all Motion and Exercises which are too nimble and swift as Running, Wrestling, Fencing, and the like; for the Spirits are driven into straits and become by degrees more feeble. *Great Joys*, says he, *attenuate and disperse the Spirits and shorten Life, and great Fears stagnate the Blood, inasmuch*

as they damp our Endeavours, and render us incapable of Action. Our Passions many times obstruct our Courage, and most of all our Impatience and Fretfulness under the Cross, for these are the Inflammation, and Fever of the Soul.

3. *The suddenness of Evil and Affliction is another cause of Faintness*; it begets a Dismayedness, Paleness, and universal Trembling and Astonishment. Thus it was with *Hezekiah*, *I reckoned that as a Lion, so will he break all my Bones*, Isa. 38. 13. A Lion lies in wait and suddenly snatches at his Prey. Job 27. 20. *Terrors take hold on him like Waters, a Tempest; stealeth him away*. Afflictions come upon some Persons as an Inundation, or a mighty Flood that carries all before it. Job 16. 12. *I was at ease but he hath broken me asunder, he hath taken me by my Neck and shaken me to pieces*: Or he resembles his Trouble to a sudden shot from a discerned Bow; *He cleaveth my Reins asunder and doth not spare*: When Affliction comes like an Alarm by night,

when we cannot take the Dimensions of our Danger 'tis very formidable and sinking ; the Spirits on this occasion of unexpected Evil, which before such suddain daunt were orderly carried by their several Motions unto their Natural works, are as some express it, upon this strange appearance of Danger so disorder'd, mixed and stifled, that there is no Power left either in the Soul for Counsel or the Body for Execution ; as an unlook'd for Invasion of an Enemy is more formidable than when we see them preparing for a Battle, and are well appointed to our selves ; these Afflictions are like Lightning, whom they scorch they do not hearten ; whereas others are like Comets they have a large Train but do not quickly manifest their destructive Influences. A suddain Evil arrests our Spirits, and we know not where we are we are amazed, and confounded, and dejected ; and these are much more fainting than those Calamities that like Thunder, roar and make a noise in a distant part of Heaven, and threaten before they come.

4. *The Evils that make us faint are very near or actually present?* There be many things which afar off we judge to be terrible, which upon a nearer approach prove to be beneficial and friendly to us; our mistaken apprehension cloaths them in all the black colours that they fright us with; Ignorance in many is an occasion of amazement, as Eclipses, in some Countries wonderfully astonish the Inhabitants, whereas Astronomers and wise Men know they have their natural Causes, and their fixed Times and Periods: So that they no more wonder at them than at the Summer or Winter. How does the poor Lamb tremble when the ravenous Wolf has seized upon it, when 'tis within the reach of the Devourer? Things remote make but weak Impressions on our Minds: So 'tis with respect to Death and Judgment, which we generally imagine to be far from us, though for ought we know they may be very near. *My Soul melteth for heaviness, Psal. 119. 28. Like Wax before the Fire, Psal. 22.*

14, 15. The sensitive Soul, as *our modern Philosophers* observe, is as a Flame burning within her Organical Body, and on every side diffuseth Light and Heat, and yet is subject to various Tremblings, Noddings, Eclipses, Inequalities and disorderly Commotions, as all Flame is observed to be ; and this Soul upon any encounter with an ingrateful Object retreats inwardly, and shrinks up her self, and is variously agitated as a Field of Corn is waved to and fro with contrarious gusts of Wind.

5. *Disappointment of Hope is another cause of Fainting*: When we hope for this or that Comfort, and have hoped a long time, and even imagined our selves assured of Enjoyment, and yet are at last quite disappointed ; we look many times for too much from the Creature, and when it proves indeed to be as it always was a vain thing, then we are apt to repine and murmur, because the Wind will not blow in that Quarter in which we would have it blow : How does man

Merchant that forgets the danger of Enemies and the uncertainty of the Seas, vex and disturb himself when he hears that the Vessel in which he had a great Cargo, or a vast Treasure is taken or cast away; how does many a Friend wait for an Estate, that perhaps may be promised them, or that by Kindred or Alliance they have a very good pretence to hope for, and the changing of the Inclination, and Resolution, and Circumstances of their Friends quite overthrows their Hopes: This indeed is an aggravated Affliction, and without due care such in whom it falls will be apt to faint and be discouraged: The wise Man says, Prov. 13. 12. The very delay of Hope creates an Uneasiness and Torment in the Mind, much more does it pain and grieve when it sinks in the Haven, or withers in the very Flower; the very delay of getting Riches and Honour is troublesome; how much more are their Contraries? The slow approaches of what we love makes us encrease our fervour of desire; and that is a spending, wasting thing

when 'tis upon the Rack ; but *when the desire cometh it is a Tree of Life*, 'tis laden with very sweet and comfortable Fruit and it has the better relish when it comes at last. Evils differ both as to their continuance and malignity or variety, and when we are many ways afflicted, or when we are unkindly used by those from whom we promised our selves the greatest kindness, by our Friends or our near Relations, or when our Friends turn our Enemies, or when we are injured by those whom we have obliged, and whom we have gratified and pleased in many cases. But this is to teach us to cease from Man whose Breath is in his Nostrils for where in is he to be accounted off. *Isa. 2. ult.* Job 17. 11. *My days are past, my purposes are broken off, even the thoughts of my heart.* He had a great many hopeful Designs in his Head when his Affliction seized him, but then they were all snapt asunder.

6. *Another Cause of Fainting is the m thinking of Trouble before it comes.* O

unpreparedness for Trouble is many times the cause of our Dispondence; for sometimes it will come whether we think or not. I must be excused if I make frequent Quotations out of *Job*, because none was more afflicted, and none was more patient. Chap. 3. 26. *I was not in safety, neither was I quiet, yet trouble came.* I was not presumptuous, neither was I secure, and yet I am miserable for all that; the Assaults of an Enemy are more penetrating when we have not fortified our selves till the blow came: 'Tis a great unhappiness to have our Cordials to seek when we are like to faint away, to have our Arms to polish when our Enemy is at the Gates; we faint in trouble because we did not in the Calm make ready for the coming Storm; we starve justly in Winter if we loytered all the Summer Season: Our negligence and want of fore-thought betrays us to innumerable Evils; and yet there may be a great hurt in thinking too much of our Troubles before they come; And out of kindness to us our Saviour bids us *not to*

take thought for to morrow, for sufficient is the
 to the day is the evil thereof. We have to
 Afflictions enough this day, let us not mu
 go in the pursuit of more, nor make the har
 Evils of to morrow come before their Co
 time; fore-thought of Trouble abates har
 in the Intensity of the Trouble, but lar
 then it encreases it by extending it: For st
 as an *Ingenious Person* observes, as a fore-th
 seen Calamity affects not the Mind with of
 so sharp an Agony when it comes, yet de
 the very fore-sight its self is some degree
 of Anxiety; so that it takes off no more
 of the present Evil than it has inflicted
 before-hand, as standing upon the Guard
 to expect an Enemy, tho' it prevents dy
 the Fright that would have been made
 by a suddain assault, yet is it a conside
 rable piece of pains and hardship in its
 self: So that though the Misery may
 seem more tolerable by being under-gone
 by degrees rather than all at once, yet
 taken all together it is nevertheless Mi
 sery. This is ingenious, but however th
 we daily see Dangers lose their formi
 dableness by our being acquainted with ob
 them

them before-hand. Soldiers that are used
to Battles do not shrink and tremble so
much as those that were never taught to
handle their Arms: And it may be the
Course which *Charles* the 5th. took might
have good Effects; he ordered a particu-
lar Solemnity, at which all his Dome-
stics should assist in Mourning, and to
this end he put himself into the Posture
of one that was to be buried: His great
design was to endeavour to accustom
himself to Death, to familiarize it to him-
self. *Charles*, as *Strada* says, by this sad
Representation of his Death did endea-
vour to diminish the fear that he had of
dying, that which this Emperor did was
so far from being a proof, that he despi-
sed Death, that it was a manifest Argu-
ment of his Fear. And a *French Author*
tells us of a Gentleman in *Languedoc*, that
with the same sort of Intention caused his
Coffin to be made, and went into it eve-
ry day and staid some hours, to the end
that as he said he might have the plea-
sure to go out again: But as my Author
observes, it was rather to strengthen him-
self

take thought for to morrow, for sufficient
 to the day is the evil thereof. We have
 Afflictions enough this day, let us not
 go in the pursuit of more, nor make the
 Evils of to morrow come before their
 time ; fore-thought of Trouble abates
 in the Intenfeness of the Trouble, but
 then it encreases it by extending it : For
 as an *Ingenious Person* observes, as a fore-
 seen Calamity affects not the Mind with
 so sharp an Agony when it comes, yet
 the very fore-sight its self is some degree
 of Anxiety ; so that it takes off no more
 of the present Evil than it has inflicted
 before-hand, as standing upon the Guard
 to expect an Enemy, tho' it prevents
 the Fright that would have been made
 by a suddain assault, yet is it a conside-
 rable piece of pains and hardship in its
 self: So that though the Misery may
 seem more tolerable by being under-gone
 by degrees rather than all at once, yet
 taken all together it is nevertheless Mi-
 sery. This is ingenious, but however
 we daily see Dangers lose their formi-
 dableness by our being acquainted with
 them

ent them before-hand. Soldiers that are used
ve to Battles do not shrink and tremble so
not much as those that were never taught to
the handle their Arms : And it may be the
their Course which *Charles* the 5th. took might
tes have good Effects ; he ordered a particu-
but lar Solemnity, at which all his Dome-
For sticks should assist in Mourning, and to
re- this end he put himself into the Posture
with of one that was to be buried : His great
yet design was to endeavour to accustom
ree himself to Death, to familiarize it to him-
ore self. *Charles*, as *Strada* says, by this sad
ted Representation of his Death did endea-
ard vour to diminish the fear that he had of
ents dying. that which this Emperor did was
made so far from being a proof, that he despi-
ide- sed Death, that it was a manifest Argu-
it- ment of his Fear. And a *French Author*
may tell us of a Gentleman in *Languedoc*, that
gone with the same sort of Intention caused his
yet Coffin to be made, and went into it eve-
Mi- ry day and staid some hours, to the end
ever that as he said he might have the plea-
mi- sure to go out again : But as my Author
with observes, it was rather to strengthen him-
her self

self against Death, whereof he had an extraordinary fear; *Monjr. Esprit sur La Fausseté de Vertus Humaines*, p. 353.

7. *A natural Weakness of the Body, or a natural Timorousness of Spirit is another cause of fainting under Trouble.* Nature doth rarely commit fine Wits to the Custody of strong and robust Bodies, but for the most part chuseth to lodge them in delicate and tender Constitutions, such as produce the purest and sublimest Spirits; which as by their greater Mobility they conduce to greater quickness of Apprehension, so are they for the same Cause more prone to expence or exhaustion upon continued Intention of Mind, nor capable of Reparation unless after due Repose and pleasant Divertisement. *Dr. Charleton, Of the different Wits of Men*, p. III. Every one knows and feels that the Soul is greatly influenced by the good or ill Temper of that Tabernacle in which it lodges; if our Bodies are healthful our Minds for the most part are at ease, they are chearful and

an and brisk, and lively, but if our Bodies
La are pained, especially to a more than or-
 dinary degree our Minds sympathize,
 and droop, and languish at the same
or time; as I seldom meet with any that
ber are in any trouble in Mind in firm unsha-
 ken Health, whilst they can eat, and
ure drink, and sleep, so I meet with few,
the tho' some there are otherwise disposed,
ies, but in the Pains of their Bodies they are
dge under some Discomposures of Spirit, and
ati- complaining that it is not with them as
bli- it used to be; tho' this natural Weakness
ter of Constitution is no Sin no more than a
ck- Falling-sickness or a Fever, or any other
the Disease which one cannot help. An Af-
or fliction may be the cause of Fainting, but
of even that affliction and that fainting are
less neither of them criminal, unless we have
ife- contributed to them by our own fault;
rent as it is not a meer being tempted for
ows which we are at any time to blame, but
en- for our Compliance with Temptation:
hat The Temper of our Mind greatly fol-
our lows the Humours of our Body, how
the quick, how nimble, and how roving is
rful our
and

our Fancy when our Blood is enflamed with Choler, how dull is our Apprehension, and how unserviceable our Memory when our Blood is benumbed with a Lethargy, our sensitive Soul is fanned by our Passions, one while it blazeth up to a dangerous excess, as it usually happens in great Anger and Indignation; another while it is in danger of being blown out, by suddain and surprizing Joy; or almost suffocated by unexpected Terror, or astonishing Grief. There are some in their very Constitution more hardy and couragious than others are, and some by the natural Weakness of their Temper do quickly faint and sink under any Trouble; the Soul being as the *Platonists* express it, in all the Body as Light is in the Air, it cannot be without some Impression from it; as the Light is either more refreshing, or less according as the Air is more or less, thick or clear; and if the Soul be unhinged or disturbed the Body bears a part in its Alterations; when the Soul mourns the Body looks wan and pale, it sheds Tears in abundance to testifie the

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Resentment that it hath of the Grief of its better part.

8. *Another cause of fainting is when we leave off the performance of Holy Duties, and those Exercises of Religion to which we were accustomed heretofore.* Industry and stirring are great Prolongers of Life, but a lazy sitting still brings innumerable Disorders both on the Body and the Soul: Fainting is a Cessation of Action, 'tis not indeed a total Death but the lowest degree of Life; in such a case the Pulse beats very feebly, and with a Motion almost unperceivable. Our Spiritual fainting is the weakness and decay of Life, it causes the Strength that once was in us to degenerate, it brings a miserable Languor on the Soul, an ill habit, as fainting Persons are neither so apprehensive as they used to be, nor can move in their former Sphere, with their usual quickness and vivacity, tho' others in these distressed Circumstances may help us when we cannot help our selves; the want of Courage in our Minds damps our Hopes, spoils

spoils our Prayers, or rather makes us unfit to pray, it raises our Passion in Murmurs and Rebellions against our Reason and our Faith, and makes all attendance upon God in his Ordinances to be verily wearisome and tedious to us.

11. *Another occasion of fainting under any Trouble is, when the Holy Spirit withdraws his gracious Influences that he uses to shed abroad upon our Hearts ; As we can learn nothing but what he teaches us to know, so we can bear nothing but what he enables us to bear : Every Yoke galls us, and every Burden sinks us if he be not with us ; nothing more promotes fainting than want of Air, when we are imprisoned and cloyster'd up with our own Fears, our spiritual Life must suffer under frequent Indispositions : Alas, how low must we sink when the Arm of the Almighty is not underneath us ; we are then in the Case of *Sampson*, our Strength is departed from us, we have no Patience but no Courage when God is not with us as he used to be ; tho' when we are*

s are duly sensible of his departure, and
 M when we repent of those Sins that occa-
 sioned so great a Misery, he will smile
 an upon us, and return again; 'till that time
 ver we are under a mental Apoplexy, we
 live indeed, but we do not perceive nor
 taste the Joys of Life, nor do we make
 nd any Progress in the way of Heaven.

with
 use 10. *Another cause of fainting under*
 w *Trouble is our Sin and Guilt;* Without
 s u this Sin we should live as Angels do that
 bu are all Activity, and have no Clogs to
 oal retard their Motion; 'tis our Sin that
 f h makes us fear and tremble, tho' we know
 ote too that our Saviour by his Blood and
 an pardoning Grace, upon our humble Sub-
 ou mission will make all calm again, and the
 ffe Knowledge of this is a great Advantage
 now to us above those who had only the Light
 th of Nature that convinced them of Guilt,
 are and urged them to endeavour to remove
 gu the Divine displeasure by many Sacrifices,
 nce but left them under many Confusions
 ith and Uncertainties: As to those things
 we which are made very and plain clear to
 are us:

us: But of this more largely hereafter. Go
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II. *The Devil is often the cause of our fainting, when we are in Affliction; Not only as he disorders our Blood and Spirits, and brings Sicknels on our Bodies, but as he casts into our Minds unbecoming Thoughts of God, and tempts us by repeated Insinuations to be weary of his Service; he watches for our halting, and when we are thrown down then he insults over our Misery, and tramples upon us: This cruel Spirit assaults us in those Seasons where he sees that we are least able to resist. As when our Saviour was faint with Hunger in the Wilderness, that he set upon him, as knowing that the Weakness of his Body would make him more susceptible of Impressions from without than he was before: But it was in vain for the Prince of the Air to think to defeat the Son of God; there is nothing that this tormented, revengeful Spirit does more endeavour to overthrow, than our firm and steady Belief of the Divine*

—God

Goodness : He says, and he makes us say, that God can help, but he will not ; he industriously strives to make us believe, that all the strokes with which we are chastized are the Scourges of an Enemy, and not the wise Methods of our Heavenly Father and our best Friend. In the Spiritual way, says a *Popish Writer*, for I must be allowed to borrow Jewels of the *Egyptians*, Persons use to be manifested with the Spirit of Blasphemy, and they are not a little nor seldom afflicted and mortified with a kind of Deliquium or Fainting, whereby the Devil seeks to stop their march, for the Soul desiring to please God and walk in his way, finds sometimes a Remisness and Weakness, that it seems almost impossible to her to advance one step, and knowing that unless she go on she displeaseth God ; and that to please him she must proceed with Chearfulness, great is the Pain she feels in beholding her own Inability to follow what our Lord would have her.

12. *The Miseries of others many times are the cause of our Fainting* : We cannot bear to see them so distressed and so miserable ; their Tears make us weep and their Groans make us to groan, the Distresses of our Friends, and of Persons under the same Roof, and in the same Family cause more than an ordinary Commotion in our Minds ; it grieves us to see their Miseries, and it grieves us to find that we cannot help them : And this sympathizing Faintness frequently seizes on those whose Natures are very tender and compassionate, as *Lam. 1. 22.* *The mournful Prophet* dissolves at the sight of *Jerusalem* then in Woe and Trouble ? Or with what a sad Eye and Heart does many a Father and Mother look on their Children, when they find their Circumstances narrowed, and their Trades and Hopes blasted, that they cannot provide for them, their Bowels earn, and their Spirits faint upon the Prospect of what is like to befall their Off-spring, and that dear part of themselves. Oh, how

are they to say, *Blessed is the Womb that never bare, and the Paps that never gave suck.* Innumerable Evils and Accidents which befall others are apt to make a great Impression upon us; as to see them under long and racking Pains, and to see those who lived plentifully and honourably brought to great Poverty and Disgrace.

13. *The Greatness and the Cruelty of Enemies is another cause of Fainting:* When they are very strong and very insolent, *Psal. 42. 3, 4.* or to be the Subject of common Scorn, to be pointed at and balladed up and down in the Streets by the off-scouring and basest of the People; as *David* complains, *Psal. 69. 12. I was the Song of the Drunkards,* and *Job 30.* from the 1st. to the 10th. Verse.

Inf. 1. *If the best of Men be liable to the faint, thro' the Greatness and Sharpness of their Troubles, and for other Causes, then it was a Vanity in the Stoicks to pretend to be insensible under the Calamities that*

beset them. Those proud Philosophers took up Opinions contrary both to the Nature of Things and the Experience of Mankind. And tho' as one says, the Writings of *Cicero* and *Seneca* may furnish us with many excellent Rules and Helps for the Tranquility of our Lives yet their Vertue is strangely abated, and their Use sadly defeated by their too much Mixture of dry and barren Speculation; insomuch that a Man may sooner arrive at the end of true Happiness than of their Disputes and Distinctions about it. After all their proud, supercilious and lofty Language they are in the same Condition with other Mortals.

Inf. 2. How miserable is the State of Man, seeing the greatest and the best are liable to faint under their Afflictions and Calamities: He must work by day in Toil and Sweat, and perhaps when he comes to rest at Night his Family is disturbed by Sicknes, or his Sleep is disturbed with terrifying Dreams, or it may be he is fretted with Cares and Dis-

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content, and so cannot sleep at all, which is a much greater Misery. One Evil is no sooner past but another comes, and *Clouds return after the Rain*; the Heavens discharge their Thunder at us, and the Earth trembles under our Feet; the whole World spreads Snares for us, and either allures us with its Smiles or discourages us with its Unkindness and Severities; every Son of *Adam* is distressed, and every Christian has his doubts and fears: He has now and then some pleasant Hopes, and some small Diversions that sweeten the Bitterness of Life: But alas, all these vanish as in the twinkling of an Eye, we are continually hearing bad news, we see others daily die, and shortly we must die our selves. This low Region where we dwell is full of Clouds and Darkness, and tho' the Sunshine sometimes, yet how many Vapours ascend that intercept its Light, and refreshing Influence? The World, saith *Eucherius*, one of the ancient Writers is now drawing towards its Dissolution, and pants with its last Gasps and dying

Annihilations. These latter Years and we
Decrepitness of time are fraught with have
Evils and Calamities, as old Age is with black
Diseases. Our Fore-fathers saw, and we I co
still see in these last days, the Plagues of of t
Famine, Pestilence, War, Destruction hap
and Terrors, all these are so many acute seen
Fits and Convulsions of the dying World thin
Hence it is that such frequent Signs are and
seen in the Firmament, excessive Eclipses and
and Faintings of the brightest Luminaries if t
which is a shaking of the Powers of Hea For
ven, sudden and astonishing Earthquake but
under our Feet, and strange Alteration mo
of Times and Governments, all which ex
are the fatal Symptoms of time indeed mar
going on; but fainting and ready to a g
expire. St.

Inf. 3. *If the best of Men are liable to Lov*
faint here, there is no doubt but there ting
is another happy State to come, where a The
their present Fears will be removed, Rev trea
21. 4. If it were not thus, we might call he;
the Beasts happy that have as sweet con
Taste of Pleasure and fewer Grievs tha Cro
we

and we: They sleep, eat and drink, and
 with have no sadning Thoughts, no fears of
 with black and hideous future Evils. When
 we I consider says one, the ancient Writers
 s of the *Roman* History: Oh, What an
 tion happy Life does that Heroical People
 ute seem to have lived? They thought of no-
 rld thing low, or mean, or sad; but Empire,
 are and Magistracy, and Honour; Provinces,
 ses and Cities, and Navies, and Triumphs,
 ries if these were the true Rewards of their
 sea Fortitude and Valour; Who can imagine
 ke but true Wisdom and Goodness shall be
 on more largely blessed? *Cardanus de Util.*
 nich *ex Advers*, Cap. p. 92. No Man did ever
 lee march under the Banners of Christ with
 a greater Bravery and Courage than
 St. Paul; and he tells us what it was
 that fired his Breast with such a strong
 Love to his Master, and with such inex-
 tinguishable Zeal, 2 *Cor.* 4. 16, 17, 18.
 There's no doubt but if we resolve to
 tread in his Steps, we shall fare as well as
 he; if we fight we conquer, and if we
 conquer we shall be rewarded with a
 Crown of Glory. This World is the

Land of the Dying and the Dead, but Heaven is truly *the Land of the Living* where we shall see, *i. e.* taste and enjoy the Goodness of the Lord for ever ; to enjoy such Favours, as he will be pleased to impart to us in that high and holy Place where he dwells, yea to have some Participation with him in his Blessedness, who is most Blessed for evermore. For as *Learned Man* observes, To see in the Language of the *Hebrews*, is to enjoy, when it is applied to a thing desirable, or to be in that State when it is applied to that which is hurtful. Thus to *see God*, Psal. 34. 12. is to possess it, and lead an happy Life ; and to *see the Good of Jerusalem* is to partake in its Peace and Prosperity Psal. 128. 5. *And to see the Goodness of the Lord in the Land of the Living.* in its first Sense to be delivered by God and to enjoy the sweet Fruits of it before he died ; and to *see Death* is to die : And this is so plain that those things that belong to other Senses yet are said to be seen, which can signifie nothing else, but that they are perceived or enjoyed.

Generation, saith *Jer.* 2. 31. See ye the Word of the Lord, i. e. Hear it, mind it, and consider. See *Bishop Patrick's Writ-nesses*, Part 2. Chap. 1. If the Date of our Existence expired with that of our Lives; and if our whole Duration were but Threescore Years and Ten, if all our Hopes were buried with our Bodies, and if we were thrust into being only, after a few Days or Years to be thrust back into nothing, it were much more eligible never to have been born, than to be born only to drop a Tear, to vent a Groan and Die; for who would chuse to float up and down a few Minutes in this stormy and tempestuous World, instantly to disappear and sink back to nothing. Who would be born for no other end then that he might be put into a Capacity to die? Who would dance upon these restless Waves a little while till either Violence crushes, or Nature sinks the Bubble into an Eternal nothing, *Parker. Demonstr. of the Law of Nature*, p. 112. How disconsolate must a good Man unavoidably be amidst his Pressures and
Cala-

Calamities, if he did not comfort himself with the hope of better things to come? How would his holy Soul daily faint and languish if the View of so glorious a Place as Heaven did not animate and quiet him? That so a Christian may be in a preparedness for all Disappointment, and less favourable Providences; and take the bitter Cup, as *Socrates* is said by one of his Admirers, to have taken the deadly Poyson that was to send him into another World: With what calmness of Spirit, says he, what Gravity of Aspect, and how steady a Hand he receives it, and drinks as if that Draught were to extinguish not his Life but his Thirst; nor did his Fortitude grow cold with his Blood, or sink with his Vital Powers, for even in the extream Agony of Death, in the last Pulse of his Heart, when the Vital flame ceased to warm him, then did the Flame of his Courage still continue, and animated him to break forth in Words that signified his Dissolution was most grateful to him.

Inf. 4. *Seeing the best of Men through the Greatness and Sharpness of their Troubles are obnoxious to Fainting: No Man has any Cause to wish for Trouble. Our Saviour does not oblige us to pray for the Cross, but to take it up when it is in our way. The way of Life is of its self rugged enough, there is no need of planting more Thorns and Bryars there. I look upon it as a great folly in Plato, who is said to have removed his Accademy from an healthful Scituation into a moorish and a foggy Place, upon which he himself laboured a long time of a Quartan Ague; and I think he was rightly served; and I am sure under such a Disease he would Philosophize in a very dull manner. The old Dotard thought, as Cardanus says of him, that as the Fruit is spoiled by the too great Luxuri- ancy of the Branches of the Vine, so is the Soul oppressed with great Health of Body; whereas nothing more hinders the Soul in its lively Motions than an indis- posed, sickly State of Body: We sink fast enough into Calamities we need not pro-*

procure them; but when they come without our seeking 'tis our Wisdom to submit, and by Faith and Hope in God to make them as sweet, and as tolerable as we can.

Inf. 5. How rugged is the Nature of the best of Men, that God is forced to use such Severities for their good, as for the present make them like to faint. Folly is bound up in the Hearts of his Children, and he is forced to whip it out: He is forced to give them bitter and unpleasant Draughts, to save them from perishing. The Afflictions of good Men are so far from being an Argument against Providence, that they are a Confirmation of it, they make them better, they keep them from doating on the Pleasures of a wretched World, they fit them for a better State, and quicken their advances thither; and it is the kindness of our heavenly Father, that he will stoop so low as to visit us, tho' it be with Rods and Chastisements: His Judgments are sent to quicken us; no place will surren-

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der till it be sorely pressed, and things come to an extremity. We are, saith the Apostle, *Shut up to Faith*, Gal. 3. 23. We can have no relief but from this excellent Grace, that by going to Christ brings us in fresh degrees of Strength and Hope. And as the Rock in the Wilderness yielded Water when it was struck, so God adds one stroak after another that we may relent. *Eusebius* speaking of the last and most cruel of all the Persecutions which begun in the Year 302. under the Emperor *Dioclesian*, says that the extream Corruption of the greatest part of Christians; their Hatred, their Envyings, their Divisions, and the like Sins were the Cause that such a terrible Tempest did arise; and that this Tribulation did cleanse them from those Impurities and Sins that prevailed before: And St. *Cyprian* (as I find him quoted by *Monsieur Daille*) in a Sermon that he made after the cruel Persecution, that was in his time under the Emperor *Decius*, alledging, the Causes and Occasions of that Persecution, says, that a long Peace had corrupted the Discipline

cipline of the Church: When God began to awake their languishing and dying Faith. Our Sins, says he, deserved a greater Destruction, and his Mercy for moderated things, that it was rather a Trial than a Persecution. All People were become Earthly and Worldly minded, to enrich themselves, and their Families was their great design. There was little Devotion amongst the Professors of Christianity, little Charity and few good Works; that then Men and Women were guilty of great Excesses in their Habits; that, Fraud, and Subtilty, and Unmercifulness to the Poor everywhere prevailed. What have we not deserved to suffer for our Sins? We have despised as he concludes the Commandments of the Lord; and it was time that he should correct our Faults, and apply to us the most severe and painful Remedies.

Inf. 6. *The World has a better outside than inside.* David was a very great Man to look upon, with his Guards and his Attendants.

Attendants, he made a mighty Shew ;
and I warrant you the People of that
time thought there was none like him,
that *He* was undisturbed, and his Head
above those Clouds that fright and asto-
nish others : But you see under all his
outward Pomp he had his inward Fears ;
neither his own Courage, nor the Valour
of his Souldiers could preserve him from
some Disorders of Mind, and from the
Neighbourhood of Fainting : Thus many
times we are apt to call those that live in
great Palaces, and have a throng of Ser-
vants, curious Gardens, and stately Rooms,
and every pleasant and diverting thing,
very happy : But all these things, and a
thousand more will not prevent nor cure
the Head-ach ; all this will not make
their Lives easie and serene without Faith
and Hope in God. The World is like
some very fine Gallant, that hath some
hidden Ulcer, and to keep off the Noi-
somness thereof from himself and others ;
he is all besmeared with Perfumes ; 'tis
grateful to the View, but narrowly
searched into 'tis as a Sepulchre fair with-
out

out and rottenness within : The World is a Cheat, and far from being what it pretends to be. Grandeur and Pomp does not keep Trouble off ; and yet so ignorant are the generality of People, that they judge of Good or Evil by their Senses : As if a Man should commend an Orchard by the greenness of its Leaves, without knowing whether the Trees that grow there are barren or fruitful ; or as if a Man should commend an House meerly by the Beauty of its outside, without knowing what Furniture and Accommodations it has within, or as if one should think that every one that hath a fine Complexion is a Wit, whereas many times under a cloudy Brow there lodges a calm and a discerning Soul. So I have many times seen that the Surface of the Earth is rugged and unpromising which hath the richest Mines underneath. And it is not always the most gilded Sign that gives you the best Chear and Refreshment on the Road.

Inf. 7. *If a Man so good as David that had the benefit of Revelation was so like to faint, then we may conclude that unassisted Philosophy cannot give us Composure under Trouble.* If the Sun do not chear our Spirits, the Moon is not like to do it with her feeble Light. The *Philosophers* are like Quacks, they pretend to a great deal and can perform very little; having no distinct Knowledge of Christ or of another State; they were full of endless Confusions, and miserably blundered in the dark, they could discover the Com-motions of the Mind, but knew not how to remove them; they very frequently murmured at the Gods, and thought that they did not govern always with invio-lable and steddy Justice. The Wisdom of Men might throw a Vail over the Visage to hide the Trouble of our Heart, but knew not how to calm its secret and uneasy Fears; they thought to chide down a Storm when it began to be boy-sterous, with grave Speeches, but when they had tired themselves with speaking, the Winds blew as high as ever: Their

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Satisfaction that they had was frequently from their insensibility, and not the Product of rational and mature Thought : The worst of Men are sometimes under an unhappy Lethargy, they are not in terrifying Pain, neither have they the Quiet of a good Conscience.

Inf. 8. *'Tis an heinous thing for a Man to resolve to put a Period to this miserable Life, because 'tis miserable.* It shews a great Weakness and Cowardize of Mind, for a Man to leap over-board because there is a Storm, whereas he should rather endeavour to ride it out, and not be amazed. No Souldier ought to desert his Post till his Commander give him leave. Every Christian should wait till he that sent him into the Vineyard be pleased to call him thence ; nor is he to murmur, tho' the Hardness of his Work, and the Heat of the Weather make him like to faint, seeing in a little time the Greatness and the Joy of his Reward will make amends for all his Toil. Self-murder is of all Evils one most horrible :
And

And when our Saviour was tempted to throw himself from the Pinnacle of the Temple, and so to be the Cause of his own Death ; he rejected so vile a Motion with abhorrence. We are in this World as in a Jail, and we must not break our Prison ; we must be at God's disposal, and not at our own ; and indeed 'tis his Power alone that can keep Persons even from so monstrous an Action : as this, when their Calamities are extream, and their Pain and Anguish insupportable : But what are the usual Temptations to *Self-murder* ? And whence it is that Persons that know not how it will fare with them in the other World do many times endeavour to make away themselves ? I have particularly shewed in my *Discourses on Sickneß and Recovery*, Pag. 137. If all Men that died, let the manner be what it would, went to Heaven, it would be a more excusable Crime, but seeing there is a State of Misery as well as of Happiness, we should be very careful not to take the wrong way ; nor to jump down a Precipice, when we may travel

on the Plain. How would a Man be looked upon that should kill his dearest Friend? And how much more unnatural and evil is it for a Man to lay violent hands upon himself? *Cato* has been by some Philosophers and others magnified for killing himself as for an Action noble and heroical; but it was not so if we consider the occasion. For when as one observes, the Battle of *Pharsalia* had decided the difference of the two great Rivals, and adjudged the Empire to *Cæsar*, and to put *Cato* into his Power; it brought him to a very considerable distress, to die by the Hands of *Cæsar*, whom he hated, was a cruel Humiliation to him; to demand his Life of him was a Submission insupportable to his Pride; seeing all things conspiring to make him unhappy, he thought of this sort of Death; and perhaps imagined that among the *Romans* such a Death might immortalize his Glory. Many have applauded him because they esteem bold and rash Actions, but those that are most knowing judge of Actions by their Prin-

Principles, and more admire those that are produced by true Courage, than those that are very resolute ; but to which Discouragement and black Despair gives the first rise.

Inf. 9. What a blessed Man is a Christian, that tho' he be in trouble, yet he patiently waits for deliverance from God : He is blessed indeed, for he is under the Care of Heaven, that tho' it suffer him to be afflicted will not suffer him to perish in his affliction, he is the Charge of Angels, that suggest to him in his Agonies many sweet and reviving Thoughts, and that keep off the evil Spirits that would poison and envenom the Wounds that he has received. A Believer has an everlasting and a sure Friend, into whose Bosom he may freely pour all his most doleful Complaints, to him he may make known all the Pains of his Body, and all the Troubles of his Soul ; with this hope, that in due time his hideous Night shall be succeeded with a pleasant Day ; he having been charitable to others God will

be kind to him. *Psal. 41. 3. The Lord will strengthen him upon the Bed of Languishing*; He will make all his Bed in his Sickneſs, he will ſweeten all his Afflictions with the moſt compaſſionate and tender Inſtances of Love; he will do every thing that may contribute to his Repole and Conſolation, he will not only make his Bed for him in his Sickneſs, but heal him too, either by recovery in this World, or a Tranſlation into Heaven, where he ſhall never faint nor be ſick again: And a Chriſtian by his Faith is enabled to do, and to ſuffer much more than other Men, *Phil. 4. 11, 12.* I can look upon the frowning World and not tremble, I can ſee it ſmile and not to be enticed to doat upon it; and the Reaſon of this his Courage, is becauſe he is aſſiſted with the Supports and Conſolations of the holy Spirit: When ever he is like to be defeated Chriſt ſends him new degrees of Strength, and bears a part of the Croſs with him, ſo that it is as it were lined with Velvet, it does not gall nor torment, 'tis light and eaſie; a Chriſtian has the
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anointing spoken off, 1 *Job*. 2. 27. And Oil makes Persons very expedite and vigorous. A Servant of Christ will not lazily say, O this Burden is so heavy, this Pain so sharp, this Disappointment so unexpected, this Loss so great, that I cannot bear it, but in an humble distrust of his own Skill looks up to his Heavenly Father, that he may be taught to bear it.

Inf. 10. Seeing the best of Men are liable to be overwhelmed with their Troubles great pity is due to such as are under sharp and long Tryals : This Job expected of his Friends, Job 19. 21. Is any so cruel as to give harsh Words to fainting People? It would be unchristian and barbarous so to do : We must never search the Wounds of any but we must prepare a Balsam at the same time ; 'tis a God-like thing to mingle sweet and bitter in our Advices and Reproofs ; to be Sons of Thunder when Persons are obstinate and insensible of the Hand of God that finites them : 'Tis kindness to bring them to a

Sense of Sin, and to use Causticks when they are Lethargick, but then we must be Sons of Consolation. To the same Sinners when they are duly penitent and humble; and this Course is like the pleasant Revolution of Winter and Summer, all fair or all storm would spoil the Beauty of the Universe; to the Afflicted, the Helpless and the Miserable, let us represent the multitude of God's tender Mercies; let us pray with them with prudent Pity, and speak in soft, and easie, and alleviating Words: Let us not look shiely, nor sourly upon them; 'tis inhumane and unchristian so to do, remembering that in a little time we may need as much pity as they need. There are three ways for us whereby to know whether our Friends are kind to us in our Distresses and Pains.

1. *When they pity us, and speak lovingly to us.*
2. *When they are ready to perform all Offices of Friendship.*
3. *When they are not weary nor tired out with our Affliction, or the repeated Acts of their charitable Help.*

I now proceed to the *second Observation*, viz.

That Faith in the Divine Goodness is the nearest way to Support and Consolation under all the Miseries of Life.

I shall shew how this Faith quiets and calms the Soul, and what it includes, and the several Duties that wait upon it.

I. *It supposes a God and a Providence, and acts suitably to such a Supposition*: It firmly relies on that great Being, and is well satisfied that he concerns himself with the most minute and small Affairs, that he rewards the Righteous, and will punish the Wicked: This Faith directs the distressed Christian to remember that all Events and Accidents are under the Government of a most wise and gracious God, and that none of those Troubles that seem most casual and contingent are by chance, or by brutal unthinking Fate; this teaches the Soul in all that befalls it to see the supreme, wisest Being managing and ruling, even the
Storms

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Storms to his praise, as well as the fair and serene Seasons. Our Saviour industriously fortifies the Mind of his Disciples with the belief of this particular and holy Providence, *Mat.* 10. 29, 30, 31. There are a great many things in Nature very terrible, there are Tempests by Sea, and Earthquakes by Land, there are Thunder and Lightning from the Clouds, and there are sore and sharp Afflictions in Families, and on our own Persons ; but he that trusts in God need not to be much afraid, it is impossible indeed, but by so many uneasie things he should be somewhat moved, but he is not overwhelmed, *Psal.* 46. 1, 2, 3. He would not trust in his Arms, nor in his Numbers, nor in his strong Holds, nor in his Treasures, nor in any of those things which are the common Support of Men, but under the most powerful Protection of his God : He would hide his Head, even in great and astonishing Troubles, that in their kind and violence are very extraordinary, for such are these which he mentions here ; whatever hard Usage, or Disappointment

ment tempts a Christian to murmur and fret, he will silence all the beginning of Discomposure with this *it is the Lord*; he knows that infinite Wisdom will not let him lose his way, that infinite Goodness will not hurt him, nor infinite Power let him altogether sink. And as *Job* saith of the Almighty, *Chap. 36. 27. He maketh small the drops of Water; they pour down Rain according to the Vapour thereof*: So does God manage Afflictions, that they do not pour down all at once to crush us, but come by such gentle degrees, that they refresh us and make us fruitful. Affliction comes not out of the Dust, *Job 5. 6*. It does not arise as a poysonous Weed of its own accord, but it is a Plant that is disposed of by a knowing and discerning Eye: In our Sicknesse we must look higher than the Temperature of the Air, or the Disorder of the Seasons; nor must we stop at the next Instruments of our Troubles and Calamities; seeing there is a great Being, at whose beck we and all others are, who influences and guides all second Causes,
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puts them into Motion, and continues and suspends that Motion as he pleaseth. Affliction is not a Child of the Earth, as mean and obscure things are said to be, or as we say of one that is meanly born, or whose Original and Descent is obscure, that he is *Filius Terræ* sprung from the Earth, the common Mother of us all; but the Rise of Affliction is an obvious known thing, 'tis from Sin that has laid the miserable Foundation of our Sorrows.

2. *Faith prevents fainting as it fixes and determines the Soul to its Duty*; and to a due Series of all Actions that tend to its relief and help, wavering and unresolvedness, an enclining sometimes this way and sometimes that, without knowing which to chuse is very tormenting and uneasie to the Mind, 'tis a continued and troublesome Fluctuation: Like a Man's being thrown first on one side of the Vessel, and then upon another by an high rouling Sea, without being able to keep himself in one pleasant Posture.

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And such an Allusion St. James makes, Chap. 1. 6. *Psal.* 112. 7, 8. Like one that with a fixed Eye regards the Cœlestial Bodies is not at leisure to mind, for that Contemplative Season, the Disorders of this lower World. There is as great difference between a good and a bad Man in Trouble, as between our Saviour and his Disciples in the Storm; they were seized with a very great Fear, and he slept very soundly, they were afraid of sinking, but he arose and calmed the Waves.

3. *Faith teaches a poor Soul that's like to faint to look upon that in God which is most suitable to its own distressed Case, to look upon him as the Father of Mercies, as the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the God of all Consolation, 2 Cor. 1. 3.* If you are a thirst, even almost to fainting; when your Fears, your Agonies, and your Pains are very great and scorching, know that he is a Fountain of living Waters that will cool and refresh your Spirits, tho' you are guilty, inexcusably guilty

guilty of many great and heinous Sins, know that his Name is to be *gracious, and merciful, to forgive Iniquity, Transgression and Sin.* It is the Wisdom of a Christian, to see how God describes himself, there being something in God answerable to whatever distress there is in the World. When you are oppress'd, think of him who is Just and Righteous, and who will in due time regard the Groans and Tears of the Fatherless and the Widows; when you are perplex'd with intricate Affairs think of his Wisdom; and when you are in spiritual Distress and Anguish of Soul, there is no fitter Title for you to consider than that he is *the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ*; for whose sake he will be merciful if you beg his help: Some of us can hearten you by our own Experience, after the unsuccessfulness of all Humane Endeavours he himself hath healed our Diseases; and the same God that has cured us can in a few moments help and deliver you. Do not wonder if there be a great variety in his Dispensations; to you if some are full of Clouds, and
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some are more serene ; for 'tis in the Church as in the World, 'tis neither all fair nor all storm : The Earth and the Trees are not always adorned with Leaves and Fruit, tho' the returning Mildness, and influence of the Spring cloaths them with Green again. The Servants of God are sometimes near a great Death, and sometimes delivered, but they are always encompassed with Dangers, and always need new deliverance. In this World they have some Evil and some Good, some Darkness and some Light, some Affliction and some Prosperity to make them by these less pleasing Vicissitudes, to long for that place which shall never change, *Eccles.* 7. 14. Often meditate on that comfortable Scripture, *Isa.* 26. 3. Do not at all doubt but he will act towards you as a gracious God, a Father and a Friend, if you humbly depend upon his Goodness ; And if such a Dependance do not allay the Trouble of our Spirits, what will ? If we continue to repine and murmur, the great Ruler of the World will pursue his own designs ; and
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it would be our Honour as well as our Safety to acquiesce in all the parts of his Administration; for thereby we might like the glorious Angels receive a mighty Pleasure by seeing that his Will is done.

4. *Faith prevents all sinking Disorders of the Soul, as it fills it with pleasant and reviving Hope; That things will be better with it hereafter than now they are, Psal. 42. 11. In all Affairs Hope is the great Spring of Action, tho' I know that many good People may be in despair; and so was David when he said, I shall one day fall by the Hands of Saul: Tho' he had to relieve his fainting, the express Promise of a Kingdom. Oh! how quieting a thing is Hope in the Word of God; 'tis a more glorious Support than the Heathens ever had, the Hope of the Gospel that maketh not ashamed, is a Plant that grows in Jerusalem, and not in Athens, it flourishes more among the Palms and Cedars of Judea than among the Myrtles and Lawrels of Greece: This Hope takes wing*

wing and flies as high as Paradise: There is nothing promotes Fainting more than when afflicted People will only judge by the present distress, and be saying, *I feel I am miserable, and all the World shall not make me to believe the contrary.* Now it is an unfair proceeding to judge of God's Designs by what at this present falls upon us; those that he seems for many tedious days to forsake may be of the number of his Children. As those that he loves may fall into great Crimes and Disorders by their own Sins, so they may be brought home with Grief and Bitterness, seeing in many Instances they also forgot his Mercies, and provoke his Justice as much as others; tho' you now see nothing but Storms, yet wrap yourselves in the Mantle of Providence, and humbly wait for the quiet Shoar: Do not always pore upon your Troubles, but study what is pleasant and reviving; you may recreate your selves with the Divine Promises and Consolations: To fainting People we give Cordials according to the Advice of the wise Man, *Prov.*

31. 6. It puts the Blood into a brisk Circulation, it recruits their Spirits, and gives them new Heart ; it makes them speak and act with more liveliness than they did before : Now your hoping in the Goodness of God will give you sweeter Joys than 'tis possible for you to receive from the most delicious and pleasant Liquors. Cant. 1. 2. *His Love is better than Wine.* You may hope that you shall be delivered because God is gracious and merciful to the afflicted ; you may hope for Pardon, because he has promised to give it to those that are contrite and humble, tho' there is a particular Faith and Hope which some Christians have that is not the Priviledge of all. *Latimer* prayed with great Zeal for three Things. 1. *That Queen Elizabeth might come to the Crown.* 2. *That he might seal the Truth with his Blood.* 3. *That the Gospel might be restored once again, once again ;* Which he expressed with great vehemence of Spirit, all which God heard him in ; but many good Men are frequently mistaken with reference to the
Distress

Distress of their Souls and Bodies, they frequently think they are lost, when it may be, help is just at end ; they judge in haste, and are moved by the Violence of their present Torture, to make the most hideous Conclusions that 'tis possible for them to draw ; and it is no wonder they do so when they are clouded with Temptations, and enslaving Fears, and do not well know which way they go, if they go at all ; and these are promoted by a total Forgetfulness of the former Mercies and Experiences that they have had, 2 Cor. 1. 9.

5. *Faith will keep you from Fainting, as it will furnish you with Courage and Resolution to prevent the first beginnings of Disquietment ;* For this like other Diseases, not being check'd at the first, is by degrees much more overwhelming : 'Tis easier to withstand an Enemy at a distance than when he has broke in upon us : It is good on the first onset of Trouble to expostulate the Case with our own Souls ; for afterwards when they are

worn and spent with sharpness and length of Trouble, they will be incapable of such a Work: A Person that is actually sunk is full of Discomposure, and it avails him little to know how he came to be so: As it signifies nothing to a drowning Man to know how he came to be in danger, unless he have something to support him and to lay hold upon. If you are naturally *Melancholy*, and fearful, by healthful Dyet, and innocent Diversions, you may at first keep under that obstinate Humour, but if it once get a head of you, 'tis like a raging and unconquerable Flame: 'Tis as vain then to think to remove it by Argument and Consideration as to remove a Mountain; 'tis only to be subdued by that Power that is Omnipotent; strive also at first to begin the Cure in your own Minds, for all other ways will but heighten your Disease, as the Restlessness of the Sick does but aggravate his Trouble. Faith will keep you from Presumption, and from looking for Deliverance and Support without the use of good and lawful Means; the
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very Activity of your Souls is a proof, that they were made for Exercise and Motion, and to concur with the Designs of God, when his Winds blow we are to sail, when he moves we are to correspond with his Motions: And Nature teaches every thing that lives to use the means of Life. Let us not at any time run into straits in hope to be delivered, nor make our selves sick in hope that God will cure us: Let us not by tormenting Passions and Cares fret and gall our own Spirits.

6. *Faith will set before your Eyes the Example of our Blessed Lord, who ran his painful Race without weariness or fainting.* Can you be more distressed than he was in Life and Death, a Man of Sorrows and acquainted with Grief; never any was so much afflicted, never any bore it with so great a Patience; he was reviled and abused, censured and belyed, yet he opened not his Mouth. Heb. 12. 3. *Consider him that endured such Contradiction of Sinners against himself least ye be weary*

and faint in your Minds. 'Tis fit that the Scholar should tread in his Master's steps: 'Tis fit that the Souldier should not refuse to march where his Commander goes before; think again and again of the Excellency of his Person, and the vile Affronts that he met withal: Take heed that you be not unsuitable to the glorious Name you bear, the Name of Jesus, beware least your Fear cause you to betray him, or to quit his Cause; when you hear Christ saying, *My Soul is exceeding sorrowful even unto death*: Do not wonder if you meet with astonishing and amazing Troubles; do not think that the most terrible Calamities of this present time are inconsistent with the Love of God: But it may be you'll say Christ was God, and so had more than ordinary Strength. The Divinity indeed, as some express it, was always attended with Holiness and Glory, but his Humane Nature by its Union with the Divine did not possess all the Glory of which it was capable, for it was to be a Sacrifice for Sin: The Divinity did not in the time
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of his Humiliation display all its Beams ; his Body tho' united to it was liable to Death, and his Soul for a Season was deprived of Joy. And tho' Christ knew that he should conquer, yet for the present he was greatly troubled ; for you know, Fear and Hope are both exercised according to the Objects that are presented to them : If the Object be pleasant then we have Hope or Joy, but if the present Evil make stronger Impressions upon us than the absent Good, then it clouds the sight of what is to come, suspends and takes off our Minds from reviving Thoughts, that we do not so much, nor so attentively consider what might alleviate our Grief : Christ was of like innocent Affections with us, and he had in his last Hours two Objects to look upon ; his Death, and that with the dreadful Circumstances of it made him sorrowful, and the approaching Glory, and that made him to drink the bitter Cup.

7. *Faith keeps the Soul from sinking under Trouble, by leading it to the Word of God*; That great Magazine of Help and Comfort; and tho' the Scriptures in our most wicked Age are ridiculed by every bold Sinner, who has lost the Power of Blushing, yet to every sincere Christian they are very dear, they are as dear and precious to him as his *necessary Food*, as knowing that when his Feet have been almost gone, they have held him up, and suggested to his poor drooping Soul many comfortable Thoughts, as *David* says. *Psal. 119. 92. I had perished in mine Affliction if thy Law had not been my Delights*: He found as many Cordials as there were Promises in the Word of God; these to his refined Appetite had a better relish than all the Dainties and Honours of his Court: This Word discovers to us that Jesus, by whose Blood we may be cleansed from all those Sins that create an Uneasiness and Trouble in our Souls; and in this Word does that Holy Spirit breath, who is the Comforter. This Word will teach us how to bear

bear the Cross and how to make it flourish into Fruit ; there are many Christians that I am sure have received support, from *Isa.* 40. v 28. to 31.

8. *Faith in God will shew you that Glory, which will be the blessed Reward of your Patience and your Hope :* And without this we might lie down under our Burdens, and with *Job* curse the day of our Birth. Woe indeed would be to us in all our Grievs and Troubles, if there were no Heaven to wipe our Tears away ; 'tis very sad that we cannot go abroad but we hear ill News, of this or that Loss by Sea, of this or that Accident by Land, and we can seldom come home but we hear the Groans of our Friends, and see them languish in tedious Pain and Misery ; and 'tis sad to think that our own Bodies must be also shortly in Pain and Misery, and it may be our Souls clouded at the same time ; but 'tis pleasant to think all this mournful Story, that we tell of our selves, and others will quickly be over, quickly shall they, and we

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we pass from this Region of Death, this World of Sorrows into the Land of the Living, where our Eyes shall never weep, our Hearts shall never ache, our Spirits shall never sink, our Friends shall never make us to mourn for their Illnesses as well as our own, 2 Cor. 4. 16, 17, 18. Oh! What sweet Hopes have we to recreate our Minds in all our sinking Tears? Yet a little while, and we shall be in Heaven, in that Heaven that we have a long time been praying for; and we may well burst out into those Words, which the Author of the Commentaries upon Job (under the Name of Origen) puts into that Holy Man's Mouth, and which I find quoted to my hand by a *Learned Writer*. *Thither will I go, where the Tabernacles of the Righteous are, where are the Glories of the Saints, where is the rest of the Faithful, where is the Consolation of the Godly, where is the Inheritance of the Merciful, where is the Blessedness of the Undefiled. Thither will I go where Light and Life dwells, where Glory and Mirth, where Gladness and Ex-*
ultation

ultation inhabit ; from whence Grief, Sad-
ness and Sighing fly away ; where the for-
mer Tribulations which afflicted the Body
on Earth are no more remembred. Thither
will I go where we shall lay down our
Troubles, where we shall have a Reward
of our Labours ; where is the Bosom of
Abraham, where the Propriety of Isaac,
where the Familiarity of Israel ; where
are the Souls of the Saints, where the
Quires of Angels, where the Voices of
Archangels, where is the Illumination of
the Holy Ghost, where the Kingdom of
Christ, where the never ending Glory, and
the blessed Sight of the eternal God the
Father. Thither will I go, there I hope
to arrive, not complaining nor finding
fault, much less cursing and blaspheming ;
but blessing and praising, and with giving
of thanks, saying, the Lord gave, the
Lord hath taken away ; as it pleased the
Lord so it is come to pass : Whatsoever
pleases God is good, whatsoever pleases
him is just. It pleased him to give, his
Pleasure was good : it pleased him to take
away, his Pleasure was just. All that
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the Lord wills is Life, is Light, is Rest and Peace, is eternal Blessedness; Whatsoever pleases the Lord therefore, whether to enrich or to impoverish all is incorruptible and endless Bliss. Blessed is the Man, O Lord, whom thou chastenest, as pleases the Lord so it is. Let the Name of the Lord be blessed World without end. Amen.

Lastly, *Faith in the Divine Goodness keeps us from fainting, as it animates our Prayers to God for Comfort and Support.* He encourages all that are afflicted to call upon him, and tho' you find your selves guilty and unworthy in all respects, yet your being helpless and desolate is a Motive that you may plead in Prayer. He hears the Ravens when they cry, the young Lions when they roar for Meat do not roar in vain; And shall you waste all your time in fruitless Cries, who are a nobler part of his Handywork? No! he will regard every Sigh and every Groan that you have after him and his Mercy, *Psal. 138. 3.* When you are like to be overwhelmed with the weight and number

ber of your Crosses, with the Unkindness of some Friends, and the Death of others: Beg of God to give you Strength, that you may neither censure his Providence, nor neglect your own Duty, that when you find that this Earth gives you no rest, you may with greater swiftness fly to that Heaven, which is the place of Life, *the calm, the chearful, and the quiet place*: If you are like to sink, beg the blessed Spirit, who will help your Infirmities, and maintain your Faith and Hope *to the very last*, Psal. 37. 24, 25. Psal. 27. 14. And you have need of a great deal of assistance from above, for all Troubles that you now feel, and for all that you may live to see: And there are many whose Youth is very lively, on whom Weakness and Decay does insensibly creep, they run a great way, but they faint at last, because they depend on their own Power. Souldiers may be Couragious on many occasions, and fight many Battles, and yet at length be Renegades, and lose both their Reward and Honour. But what I have now delivered

red is but as the Introduction to what I have further to say to afflicted Persons; and which they may expect in a Second Part if they find this Discourse any way tend to promote their Consolation, as I earnestly beg of God that it may.

The Conclusion, with Reference to the particular Occasion of this Discourse, viz. the Death of Mr. Edward Rede.

YOU'll say perhaps what's all this that I have spoken, to a Funeral Occasion: What signifies a Discourse against Fainting when we see one that has fainted and died away. I answer, it signifies very much, for tho' all that we say will not warm the Ashes of the Dead, yet it may serve to kindle a Flame of Love in our own Hearts, and may shew us that neither the Firmness of our Health, nor the Briskness of our Spirits, nor the Vigour

Vigour of our Constitutions, nor the Resolution of our Minds can fence us against evil Accidents, nor enable us to bear them when they come, unless we call in the Aids of Faith, and unless we are assisted by a Power Superior to our own.

As to the *deceased Gentleman*, I hope he was prepared to die, and so did not faint away. He had a Trust in the Merits and the Righteousness of Christ alone, and he will never suffer those to sink that sincerely trust in him. They may part with their Bodies that have often indisposed, and clogg'd, and hindered their better part; but their Souls with cheerfulness pass away into a bright Eternity: They set as to this World, and it may be as in a Cloud, but they rise in Glory in another. They are changed, *their Countenance is altered*, and their Breath is stopt, and they are no more the same lively, active Persons that they used to be, no more so as to us, nor as embodied, but they go into a Region of pure, delightful Thought and Contemplation.

plation. As our Saviour saith, *They never see Death*, they never have their Souls separated from God, nor cast out of his Presence with abhorrence, which is *the Death of Death*, and which fills all the cur'd Spirits with intolerable Anguish and Amazement.

This deceased Person was altogether a stranger to me, and it cannot be expected, that I should say much of one with whom I had no Acquaintance; tho' it should seem that he had heard something even of so inconsiderable a Person as I am: And upon his falling sick he had a desire to see me; and as soon as the occasion of visiting him presented its self, I waited on him, tho' he was then extreamly weak, and his Spirits by the Violence of his Disease greatly sunk. Upon my coming to him, which was about an Hour before he died, he seemed to rouse up all the small remaining Force of Nature that was left, that he might speak to me; and with a feeble Voice, he told me, That in the Country he had seen two Books of mine, *viz. My Fall not*

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out by the Way, and my Discourse of Melancholy and Trouble of Mind, with which he seemed not ill pleased. I told him I would be as helpful to his distressed Case, as my poor Capacity would allow, that is, I would assist him with what Counsels and Directions I thought were most seasonable for one so low and weak, and in the Apprehensions of others, as well as in his own so near Eternity. I suggested to his Meditations what I judged proper, both with respect to his Life past, and that unchangeable World, on the Borders of which he seem'd to be. I desired him to call to mind, as he was able, the Sins of his former Life, with Self-abasement and Abhorrence, and to look up to the great Redeemer for Grace and Pardon. He was I hope in a Frame suitable to his then approaching Change, which it seems came upon him in a few Minutes after. I prayed with him, and had the Concurrence of several of his dear and deeply affected Relations and Friends, and our united Cries obtained speedy help for him, and he was soon

released from this miserable World. It was observed by some of his Acquaintance, that in the latter part of his Life he grew more serious, and as the bright setting of the Sun is a sign of good Weather, and a fair Evening gives us the hopes of a fair Morning : So his more intense Application of himself to good things was in mercy to him, that he might be better prepared for another World. His Constitution was very strong, and yet in four or five days was he brought to the Gates of the Grave, and went thither, as many strong Persons have of late died very suddenly : So we sometimes see lofty Oaks which use to last very long torn up by the Roots with a sudden Tempest, whilst the lesser Shrubs are spared. People of a weak, puny make, and that languish under frequent returning Illnesses do many times survive those that are most robust, *Job* 21. 23, 24.

I am told by such as attended to his dying Language, That *he greatly bewailed with a very sensible Grief ; The neglect of Family Duties*, which he owned himself

self in some measure guilty of. And indeed an Omission of Duties so necessary, and so beneficial were not to be looked upon without some bitterness of Spirit ; inasmuch as the Master of a Family is to be as the *High-Priest of such a Society*, daily to offer up their common Praises and Requests for common Mercies, and the supply of common Wants. Every Family ought to be as a *Little Church*, pe fumed with Incense, and full of good and sacred Employment. I take this opportunity to urge with some vehemence the Performance of the Duty of *Daily Prayer, Morning and Evening in Families*, that I might touch upon the same String with *my Reverend Fathers and Brethren the Dissenting Ministers in and about London* ; who have lately unanimously preached upon this Subject, out of the Zeal they had to revive true Practical Religion among us in an Age and Season of so general Coldness and Indifference : And it comforts me greatly to think, that so excellent a Design hath had so good Success, as I know it

has in many places, many Masters of Families, having begun to set up the Worship of God there; and to begin it with Grief and Joy, with grief for having so long neglected such an useful and pleasant Duty, and with joy to think that they may obtain a Pardon for their former Omissions by a sincere Performance of their present Duty; and I wish and hope that the Seed which has been so liberally thrown into the several Congregations may spring up to a more glorious Harvest; by which our Nation, our Cities, and our Assemblies may be more blest and flourishing. Be sure that none of you that have Families dare to omit this Duty of Daily Prayer, Morning and Evening: Such an Omission will be bitterness in the latter end. It is not a Duty that belongs to one *Party or Perswasion*, but to all that call themselves Christians, or that would be sincerely such, and have a Life agreeable to so great a Name. We have the *Ministers of the Church of England* agreeing with us in this Matter, and we disagree in nothing that is *Essential* to Religion;

ligion; tho' we cannot comply with them in some of their *Ceremonies*, yet we honour *their Learning, their Piety and their Gifts*, we wish them good success in their zealous Endeavours for the Conversion of Souls; and we doubt not but they will wish us the same; and I hope both of us will rejoice that Christ is preached, tho' by some in a *Publick Church*, and by some in a *Meeting*, by some in a *Gown*, and by others in a *Cloak*. It is easie for us to maintain mutual Charity, to be civil, and courteous, and affable to one another, tho' we cannot all think the same things. I would have the waspish Persons of all sides to consider, that tho' we have two Names, yet we have *one and the same Religion*, and to us both the *Holy Scriptures are the only Rule of Faith and Manners*. I find indeed a Learned Writer in his Preface to his *Devout Christian*, a very excellent and profitable Book, using these Words, *Nor shall I go about to shew how much the publick Service of God in his own House is to be preferred before the private Devotion*

of Families at home ! There being no Reason as far as I understand, to make the latter necessary, but only because in most places Christian People cannot meet together at the Church every day, Morning and Evening, to give to God the Glory that is due to his Name : But is there no necessity to keep up due ties in Families, when their Mercies, and their Sins, and their Wants are particular, and may be much better acknowledged and lamented among themselves than among others, who have different Wants, and Crimes, and different Circumstances ; perhaps they are rejoicing when we mourn, or mourn when we rejoice : Besides if this *Learned Doctor* would be pleased to consider, he would plainly see that this Assertion overthrows all private Worship in Families as such, and turns it all to publick, *i. e.* Worship of Assemblies ; which have by those that have opportunity of going to Church, and by those that have not, been always looked upon as two distinct things. I hope if he were acquainted with what I say, he would not blame

me for so mild an Observation, seeing I only mention, that which has offended some good Men that are void of *Prejudice and Faction* : And therefore I'll give you the Opinion of Dr. Sharp, the present *Arch bishop* of *Tork*, in his Sermon at *St. Giles in the Fields*, when he left that Parish. Having spoken before of the Duty of private Prayer, he says a little after. — *I have another thing to recommend to those that are Masters of Families; they are Heads and Governours of a Society, for indeed the first Notion of a Society is that of a Family; every Family is a little Kingdom and every Kingdom is or ought to be a great Family: Now is it natural? Is it decent, that there should be any Society on Earth, wherein God should not be owned and worshipped? And yet woe be to us, how many thousand Families are there in this Kingdom; nay, I am afraid, even in and about this City, wherein God is not so much as named in publick, unless perhaps by way of Affront by the way of Cursing and Swearing. We deservedly complain of the great Loose-*

ness, and Prophaneness, and Irreligion that hath overspread the Face of this Nation. O ! I doubt a great deal of the blame of it lies upon the Householders, the Masters of Families among us, if they would take better Care of their Children and Servants, things would not be so bad among us ; But how can we expect better when there is no Religion either taught or practised in our Houses.---- Let us bring Religion into our Families, and not be content that once a Week some of our People in their turns should hear something of it. Let us every day call our Family together, and pay our common Tribute of Prayer and Praise for the Mercies we do daily receive in common.

Another thing that lay upon the Spirit of our dying Friend, and extremely troubled him, was, that he had not joined himself to some Society of Christians, for the benefit of Church-Communion. Little do those who through Carelessness and impious Living, or a great Niceness and Scrupulosity of Temper neglect fitting themselves for the Lord's Supper, and there

there partaking of the Bread and Water of Life know of what innumerable Refreshments they deprive their own Minds, what Peace, and Joy, and Consolation they lose that others feel, who devoutly receive a share of that Divine Banquet: Besides 'tis an open slighting of a plain Command of Christ, *Do this in remembrance of me*: Tho' I would be loath to say that those that do not come to the *Lord's Table* can be no *Christians*, because many that reverence the Institution, suspect their own fitness, and are afraid of receiving their own Damnation: But however, if they resolve to stay till they have no *fears* they may stay till they die; and they are not, nor never will be fit to die, if they are not fit for the Lord's Table: If they are willing to receive Christ as he is offered in the Gospel; if they are willing to part with every known Sin, and to strive and watch against it by the help of God; if with humble grief and shame for all Transgressions they give up themselves to be the Lord's, to obey his Commands, and
trust

90 **Consolation for**

trust him for his Rewards, and to use their Bodies and their Souls for his Glory they may and ought to come to the Lord's Table : No *Church of Christ* has Power to refuse any so qualified ; and if they stay away they must do it at their own peril. But there are many other Advantages of Church Communion besides this of the *Lord's Supper*, those that are fixed stately to this or that Society have a Minister, who is under an Obligation to watch for their Souls, and to whom in all Troubles of Mind they may repair for Assistance and Direction ; and further, those that are in the same Communion, and under the same Minister, will with a more compassionate Eye and sympathizing Spirit look upon them : And besides they will mutually Counsel, and Advise, and Reprove one another ; which is much more beneficial than living at large without being related to any one particular Society. I know that our *Atheistical Age* which is fertile of every vile thing has produced a monstrous Brood of unthinking Animals, who poysoned

soned by their own evil Inclinations, and the silly, and irrational Examples, and Sayings of others, undervalue all Ministers and our Assemblies, care neither for the more publick way of Worship, nor for ours. But our deceased Friend was not of this number, for he had resolved, if God had spared him Life, to have joined himself to those with whom he might have participated of all Ordinances, and by their Assistance and his own Care have travelled comfortably in the way to Heaven.

As to the other things that relate to the *Character of the deceased*, the best Account I can give you of him, is from a Letter which I received from a *Young Minister*, who was acquainted with him. The Substance whereof is as follows:

Altho' I was not with him thro' all his Sickness, yet I saw him time enough to be a Witness to that which procured my great Satisfaction. The pious Motions and Workings of his Spirit I saw
when

when he was weak, make it a kind of just Debt to him, to conclude that they were more considerable when he was stronger. When I made my first visit to him, he was at it were struggling with Death, and yet even then he made a pious use of the imperfect remainder of his Life; and tho' his Strength was so decayed, and his Spirits so dissipated, that I believe it was a pain to him to recollect and gather enough to speak, yet he spoke to so good purpose, that tho' every breath he drew might have made one think that Life and Words would have come forth together; yet those dying Words in my esteem brought that Spiritual Life and Savour with them, that seemed to infer the being of a Fountain, and Principle from whence they were derived. There hardly was a Sentence I delivered in reference to his present Case, but it produced in him some considerable Motion of Affection; his Understanding was no way impaired by his Sickness, nor the quickness of his Apprehension much abated. But his Judgment seem'd strong, his Conceptions clear, his Senses vigorous, and his

his Expressions affectionate: He discovered an extraordinary Readiness to give Satisfaction to any Inquiries about his Spiritual State, and a most remarkable Willingness to have the Goodness of it tried by the Touch stone of the Holy Scriptures; neither was the ingenuous Freeness that he used limited here: He freely and pathetically discovered his Mind as to the Sins and Failings that burthen'd his Conscience. And truly it seemed to flow so naturally from him, that I must hopethere was no disagreement between the Language of his Heart, and that of his Lips at that time. 'Tis certain that we must leave the Secrets of Hearts to an Omniscient God, when we pretend to penetrate into those hidden Recesses, and to look into those Obscurities which are there, no wonder if our Judgments are bewildred, and our Minds rather confounded than informed. But yet if Death-beds be places in which Men will be serious if ever, as sure they are, then we must take the Conclusions of our dying Friends, and put the most gentle
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Construction upon them, that Truth, Charity and Scripture will allow of. I pressed him for an Answer to several serious Questions which I asked, particularly I desired to know the present Posture his Faith and Hope were in. and the Grounds he had for either ; he answered to this purpose, that Christ was his only Foundation, and that he expected Remission of Sins, and Acceptance with God through the valuable Satisfaction he made to Divine Justice ; and that he to the utmost of his Power did depend on the Merits, Power and Grace of Christ, for his eternal Salvation. I told him that there was a counterseit Faith as well as a true one : And that Self-delusions were as easie as they were dangerous : And that a Death bed was the most dismal place for a Man to deceive himself upon, since passing into Eternity was too costly an Experiment for the Proof and Trial of Impostures. He expressed a zealous Desire. and an affectionate Care that he might not conclude upon, nor make Pretensions to eternal Happiness from a wrong

wrong Title: And when I earnestly pressed him to improve the remaining Moments of his Life, applying himself to Christ by a lively Faith, imploring the full and eternal Pardon of every particular Sin, whereby he had provoked the Majesty of Heaven: Labouring to work his Heart into a godly, penitent Frame, before it was seized by Death; which I told him, I perceived was advancing to strike the concluding Blow: To these and many such other plain Counsels, he returned me his Resolutions and sincere Endeavours so to do as long as Life and Breath remained with him. If this Memorial does any thing assist you, or may influence the Revival of the pious Memory of so dear a Friend, it will be esteemed a considerable Piece of Service by

Feb. 3. 169³/₄

Your Servant,

H. Ditton.

As to you that are the Relations of the deceased Gentleman, you have lost a dear Friend,

Friend, and lost him sooner than you looked for, but endeavour you to have God for your Friend, who will never die. If you as well as your departed Husband and Father have found an *Unkind Relation* you must not murmur and repine: You must be ready to forgive as you hope to be forgiven: And you have an Example of this *forgiving Temper* in your *departed Friend*, who tho' he said that the unkind usage which he received from a near Relation, procured to him a great deal of trouble, yet he heartily forgave him all those Injuries which he apprehended himself to have received from him, and subjoyned his most hearty *Prayers to Almighty God for him, that he might repent before Death gave him a Summons in God's Name and Authority, to answer at the dreadful Tribunal of the Judge of *quick and dead*: And I am told, he reckoned himself particularly obliged to say this. And whatsoever Disappointments you meet with, they may by your good Improvement promote and further your eternal Felicity; and then
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one of the greatest Blessings that you could have wish'd for, will be your disappointment. As many Persons are Shipwrack'd into the Haven, so many come to Heaven by the Cross, whom a milder and a gentler Method would not have brought thither. Trust in God, who hath said; Jer. 49. 11. *Leave thy Fatherless Children I will preserve them alive, and let thy Widows trust in me.* Our Earthly Friends alter their Designs, and change their Purposes, and defeat our Hopes, but the *Rock of Israel will never change*: He will most certainly perform all his Promises on which he hath caus'd us to depend. You have now by some Experience seen what a vain thing the World is, and how necessary it is to lay up for your selves Treasures in a better place. And we have many times occasion to say with *David*, Psal. 62. 9. *Surely Men of low degree are Vanity, and Men of high degree are a Lye, to be laid in the Ballance they are altogether lighter than Vanity.*

It is a great loss to you to have so suddenly lost a Relation, but the Dispensation was more merciful then if he had been rack'd and tortured with severe Pains for many Weeks and Months together. I know when Death smites a *Master of a Family* : 'Tis like smiting of the Shepherd and the Sheep are scattered, it causes a great alteration in the Affairs of his surviving Friends.

I shall not need to insist upon many Motives to support you under such a stroke as this. Learn you to be ready, seeing you may be quickly called away, learn you to continue your Trust in the Almighty, who can change the Thoughts and Hearts, and Inclinations of Men ; and make those to be kind whom you have thought not to be so ; as you know the Face of *Esau* was to *Jacob*, as an *Angel of God*, that is very friendly, and pleasant, and refreshing. Poor *Jacob* looked for nothing from his Brother, but rugged and severe usage : But lo, what a comfortable Change, *Gen. 33. 10*. The Hearts of Men are in the Hands of God,

as the Rivers of Water, and he can turn some of those Streams to you which now run another way, and 'tis easie for him so to do. Thus *David* said, 2 *Sam.* 9. 1. *Is there yet any that is left of the House of Saul, that I may shew him kindness for Jonathan's sake.*

However it be, as our Saviour says, *A Man's Life consists not in abundance*, if you be good, you may be happy with a little, and if you should not be so, all this World cannot make you blessed. If you continue to be disappointed, you may live perhaps with less Grandeur and Pomp but with more Innocence and Safety. It is not your rich Attire, nor your plentiful Accomodations on the Road that will be to your eternal Honour, but your well arriving at your Journey's end. Oh! how many does God favour by denying to them what of this Earth they most earnestly desire, but it would have been prejudicial to their Souls: Endeavour therefore to kiss the Rod that chastens you, and bless your Maker when he takes away as well as when he gives. Let no

murmuring Word against him, nor no reviling at any other proceed out of your Mouth; be meek, and patient, and humble, and resigned, and all that hath befallen you, or can befall you shall work for good.

I might propose a great many Arguments to Mourners, to support them under the Loss of Friends, but I know nothing fitter to be considered than *the Sovereignty of God*, who has made our Clay into this comely Shape, and must cause it to return to Dust when he will. He appoints us our Work, and to him must we be accountable when we have *accomplished*, as an Hireling our day. Under Afflictions, let us say, *It is the Lord* whose we are, and in whose Hands our time is; if we are discontented with his Providence in a moment can he cut us down, and throw us into the same Grave with those whom to the dishonour of his infinite Wisdom, that knows the most proper Season of their Death we lament with unprofitable Tears. Our holy departed Friends see no more, this World of Misery,

fery, this gloomy Region of the Dying and Dead ; but they ſee *the Goodneſſ of the Lord in the Land of the Living.* Let us not mourn as without hope, but ſo watch and pray and live, that they and we, may that Chriſt and we may meet with Comfort in the great Day, and never, never part again. *Amen.*

F I N I S.

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